

Chapter **8** *eight*

Other **Road Users**

Motorists should always be on the lookout for pedestrians. Children and other pedestrians are often victims of traffic accidents. Pedestrian activity is not only heavy in cities and town centers, but also heavy in neighborhoods and along and across suburban roadways.

Look for signs that mark special hazard areas, such as school zones, bus stops, playgrounds, parks and other places people are likely to be playing and crossing streets.

Always watch for movement around parked cars. Drive cautiously along roadways with on-street parking because pedestrians may appear from between parked vehicles.

Visually Challenged Persons

Under New Jersey law, blind persons using a predominantly white or metallic walking cane, or accompanied by a guide dog, or a guide dog instructor engaged in teaching a dog to be a guide to the blind, always have the right of way when crossing any highway or intersection. Stop for any person with a white or metallic-colored cane, or with a guide dog.

Bicycles, Skateboards and Roller-blades/In-line Skates

Leave plenty of room when following or passing a bicyclist, skateboarder or in-line skater. Each of these, under New Jersey law, has the same rights and responsibilities as moving motor vehicles.

While bicycles ridden after dark must have front and rear lights and a rear reflector, these illumination devices may be hard to see. Be aware of the presence of smaller vehicles when driving.

When turning right, motorists should be aware of bicyclists, skateboarders and in-line skaters. Wait until the intersection clears. Under New Jersey law, motorists signaling a right turn must yield to bicyclists, skateboarders and in-line skaters moving through an intersection.

To turn left, a bicyclist, skateboarder or in-line skater may choose to use traffic lanes to turn as a vehicle would. Motorists should be aware that a bicyclist, skateboarder or in-line skater may ride on the right edge of the turn lane.

Motorcycles

The same laws governing other motor vehicles govern motorcycles. However, because of the smaller size of motorcycles, extra caution should be used when sharing the road.

Do not follow motorcycles too closely. Be aware. Slippery, sloped or uneven surfaces, and grooves and gratings in the roadway, present potential hazards for motorcyclists. Objects on the roadway also present challenges. Be ready. Motorcyclists must react to these situations differently than motorists driving passenger vehicles.

When being passed by a motorcyclist, maintain speed and position. Allow the motorcyclist room to complete the pass and resume proper lane position.

The failure of motorists to detect and recognize motorcycles in traffic is the most common cause of motorcycle accidents. Be aware.

Mopeds

Motorized bicycles or mopeds are low-speed, two-wheeled vehicles with pedals intended for limited use on public roadways. Moped drivers may not exceed 25 mph, must follow all traffic signs and signals, and drive on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic.

Be alert for mopeds, which are smaller than motorcycles and harder to see. Moped drivers have the same rights and responsibilities as those driving other motor vehicles.

Horseback Riders and Drivers

Horse-drawn vehicles and horseback riders have the same rights and responsibilities as do motor vehicles when using public highways. Approach a horse or horse-drawn vehicle with care at a maximum speed of 25 mph. Observe hand signals made by the driver or rider.

Horse-drawn vehicles and horseback riders may not use certain limited access highways and must ride with traffic, keeping as far to the right as possible. Other rules apply.

Speeding and illumination rules apply. A light must be displayed on the back of a horse-drawn vehicle from thirty minutes before sunset until thirty minutes after sunrise, and in foggy weather.

Animals

Animals can dart into the road suddenly. Trying to avoid an animal when it does dart into the road may cause an accident. A good defense against such accidents is to watch for animals on both sides of the road, and be prepared for the unexpected.

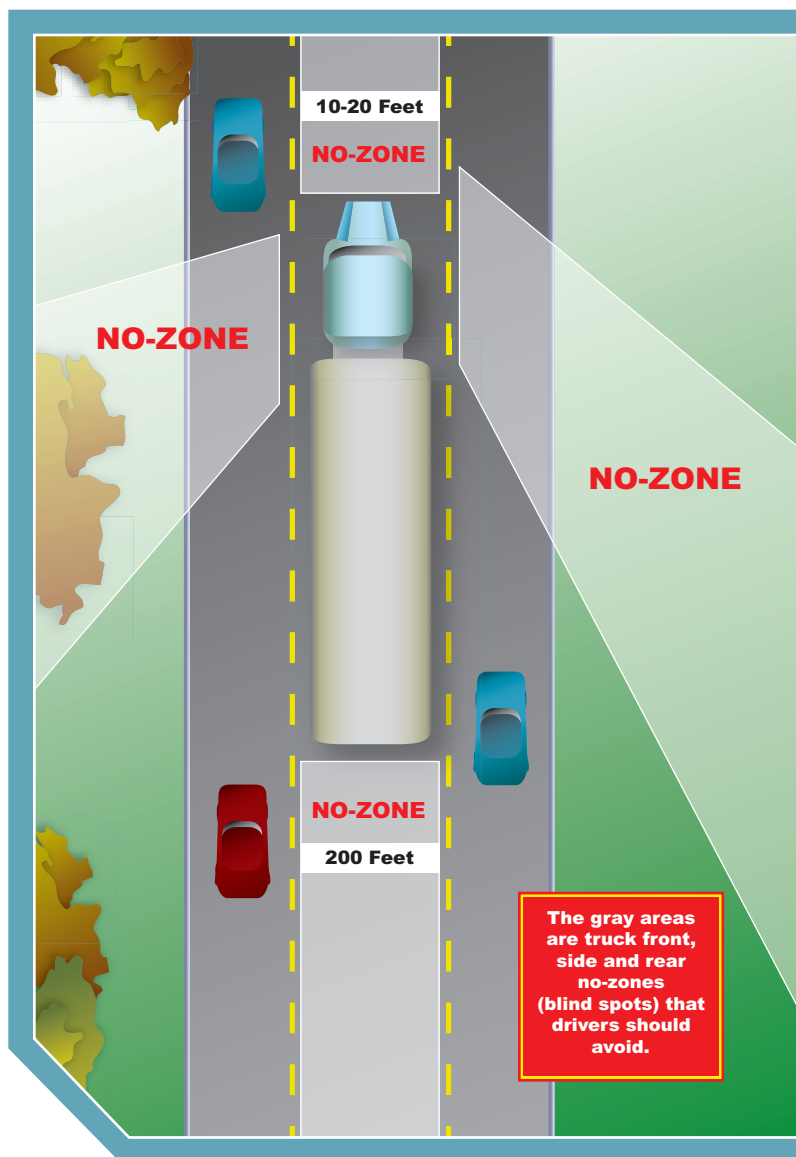
Trucks, Tractor-Trailers and Buses

When driving alongside trucks, use caution. Sharing the road with larger vehicles can be safe if you know the limitations of these vehicles regarding visibility, required stopping distance and maneuverability. When passing a large truck or bus, it's important to remember that there are several no-zones (blind spots) in which the driver cannot see you. In addition, during adverse weather conditions, a truck can take as much as 25% longer to stop than usual.

Yielding to Commercial and School Buses

On August 1, 2004, a new law (P.L. 2003, c. 226) became effective requiring all non-emergency vehicles to yield the right of way to buses re-entering traffic after dropping off or picking up bus passengers. Once the bus is back in the normal flow of traffic, though, motorists are not required to yield the right of way to buses changing lanes, and bus operators are required to drive in a safe and responsible manner. The law was enacted to improve safety on the state's roadways. Violations of this law carry a fine of not less than \$50 or more than \$200, up to 15 days in jail, or both a fine and jail term.

For safety, follow the *no-zone principle*:



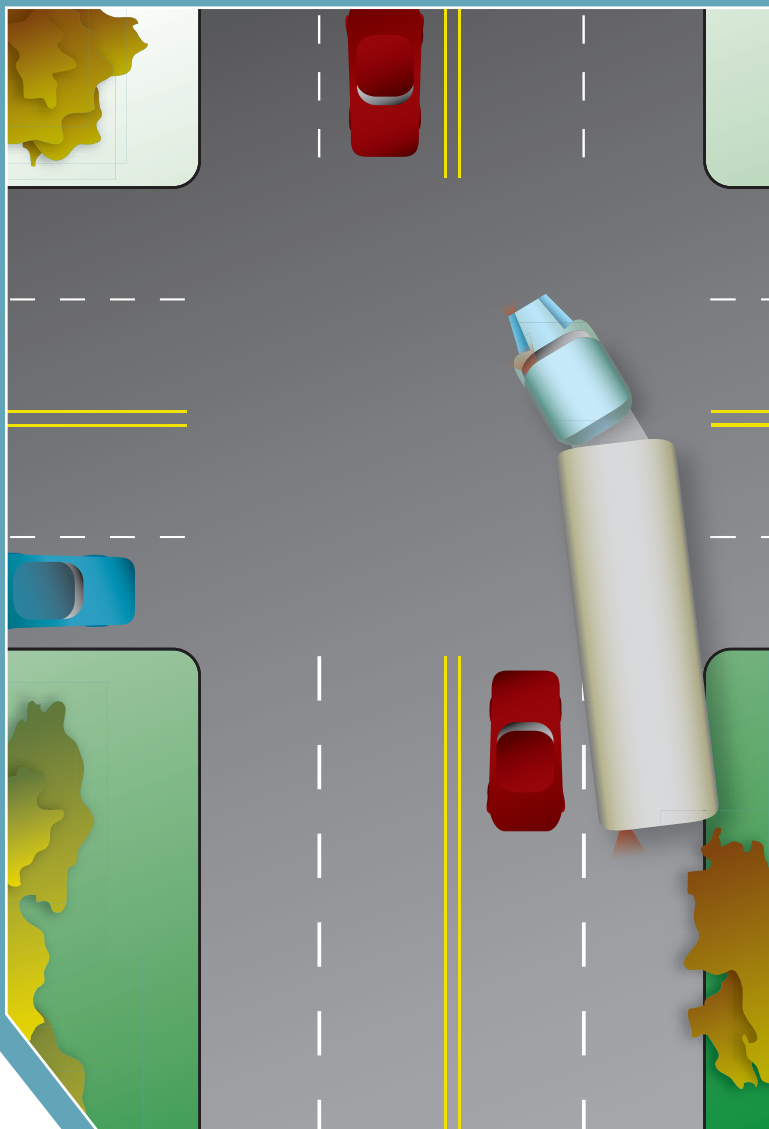
Avoid the area around trucks where cars disappear into blind spots. Do not move so closely to a truck that the driver's ability to stop or maneuver effectively is restricted. The potential for a collision is increased for motorists driving in a no-zone. If the driver of a large truck or bus cannot see you in his rearview mirror, you are in a "no-zone" or "blind spot."

Rear no-zones: Stay safely behind a truck that is preparing to back up. Do not pass if the truck is backing up. The area behind a truck is a no-zone blind spot.

Increase following distance behind a truck or other large motor vehicle so the driver can see other motorists. Do not tailgate. Do not remain sandwiched between two trucks. Maintain a sizeable space cushion.

When stopping at a light or a stop sign behind a large truck, stop with enough distance so that you will not be in a blind spot and you can see the driver in his mirror. In addition, be sure to leave ample space when facing uphill because trucks may roll backward slightly when starting up.

Give more roadway to a truck driver negotiating a wide turn in all instances. (see below)



Front no-zone: Maintain a consistent speed when passing. Do not pull in front of a truck when passing until the whole front of the truck can be seen in the rear-view mirror. Always signal before changing lanes. Do not pass a truck on the right.

Side no-zone: Drive away from the long blind spots on the sides of trucks. If the driver must change lanes quickly or make an emergency maneuver, don't be in the way. Do not linger alongside a truck when passing.

Head-on no-zone: Bear right when a large vehicle is approaching in an opposite lane. Wind turbulence will be reduced.